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ABSTRACT

This project provided individual and small group remedial reading instruction to pupils in 14 alternative high schools in New York City. Students were assigned on the basis of a minimun of two years retardation in reading skills as determined by standardized reading achievement test scores, recommendations of guidance counselors and staff judgments as to need. All work took place in a specially equipped reading laboratory. A total of 707 pupils were reported as having been tested before and after participation in the program. It was concluded that the program had satisified its statistical objective with respect to improvement of reading skills of pupils on all grade levels. (Author/AM)

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EVALUATION REPORT

Function No. 09-69617

READING SKILLS LABORATORIES FOR ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOLS

SCHOOL YEAR 1975-76

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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BASIL B. BEEKEN

An evaluation of a New York City School District educational project funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (PL 89-10) performed for the Board of Education of the City of New York for the 1975-76 school year.

UD017184

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CHAPTER I

THE PROGRAM

This program is designed to provide instruction for pupils whose reading ability is two or more years below their grade level. This level is determined on the basis of their most recent Metropolitan Achievement Test and whose behavior in school has been characterized by a record of truancy and lack of motivation academically. The program provides instruction for pupils in the grades 9 through 12 in New York City alternative high schools. It makes use of diagnostic and prescriptive procedures in a laboratory setting. Particular emphasis is placed on remedying specific reading deficiencies.

In the past school year (1975-76) the program functioned in 13 alternative mini-schools each associated with a regular high school. It was staffed by 13 teachers, assisted by two teacher trainees and directed by a central coordinator.

Pupils regarded as economically and academically disadvantaged and considered to be high academic risks were selected for enrollment in the program by their advisors and/or teachers. The total number of participants for the school year was 985. (281 in the ninth grade, 335 in the tenth grade, 196 in the eleventh grade, and 173 in the twelfth grade.) The program proposal called for 804 pupils, so that the actual enrollment was 122.5% above that called for.

CHAPTER II

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The project objectives as set forth in the evaluation design directive of August 1975 were as follows:

1. Determination of whether the reading scores of the pupils enrolled in the program show a statistically significant difference between actual post-test scores and predicated post-test scores using the California Achievement Test.

2. Comparison of the extent to which the program was implemented with that prescribed in the project proposal.

The evaluation objectives and procedures were as follows:

Evaluation Objective #1 : "As a result of participation in the Reading Skills Laboratory Program for Alternative High Schools, the reading grade of the student participants will show a statistically significant difference between the actual post-test score and the anticipated post-test score."

The subjects constituted all enrolled pupils who were pre and post-tested. The instrument used was the California Achievement Test, 1970 Edition, Forms A and B, Level 4. The data analysis used the correlated "t" test in an historical regression design.

Evaluation Objective #2: "To determine the extent to which the program, as actually carried out, coincided with the program as described in the Project Proposal."

Observations were made at all schools where the reading skills laboratories were operating. Note was taken of classroom organization and teacher techniques. Student folders were examined. Classroom teachers, teacher trainees and a sampling of pupils were interviewed.

Liaison meetings were held with the project coordinator.

Visits were made to teacher training conferences.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

1. Classroom Facilities

The physical facilities provided for the project activity at the various schools were for the most part adequate. In the few cases where the facility allocation was cramped or was a fixed seating classroom, ingenuity on the part of individual teachers ameliorated the inadequacies encountered. However, for the most part facilities met with the stipulations set forth in the proposal of the program.

In all of the 13 alternative school sites the pupils in the reading skills laboratories were provided with an environment of individual and small group instruction that met project proposals. The dedication of the individual teachers to the program goals was particularly noticeable.

2. Materials and Equipment

A varied assortment of individualized self pacing reading materials were more than adequately provided to satisfy pupil reading requirements at different levels of proficiency. The software materials included drills in word recognition, comprehension, inference, interpretation and reference skills. Small libraries of paperbacks on subjects relevant to the age group were maintained and used. The hardware encountered consisted of Tachistoscopes (Tach-X), the Controlled Reader (EDL) and the Aud-X (EDL).

The judgment is that supplies were more than ample to meet the needs of the enrolled pupils.

3. Duration, Enrollment and Attendance:

Initially for this school year the program was organized to function in fourteen high schools, but because of local budget cuts and staff reduction one school was eliminated from the program. The remaining thirteen schools provided for 985 pupils whose reading levels were at least two years below their grade level. On the average they were enrolled for one forty-five minute period of instruction per day each school week in addition to their regularly assigned period of English instruction. The program began in September 1975 and terminated in June 1976. A review of randomly selected attendance records from the project schools indicated that attendance in the program compared on a par with that in the associated regular school.

4. Teacher Training:

Effective training of new teachers and improvement of experienced teacher techniques was actively pursued throughout the year and fully met the obligation of program directives in this respect. Teacher trainees, as well as the Project Coordinator visited the schools on varying schedules. The frequency of visits was determined by specific teacher requirements. Teachers were advised on administrative and record procedures, organization of skill centers, use of curriculum materials and techniques in handling diagnosis and prescription. Teachers were, also,

required to attend training sessions given by the Project Coordinator throughout the school year. The sessions were deemed to be of considerable value by the teacher staff.

5. Program Administration:

A high level of coordinating and administrative ability was in evidence by the staff assigned to direct this program. It was observed, that with the responsive supervision demonstrated during the school year, the program functioned quite smoothly and efficiently.

6. After School Time with Pupils:

Time was allocated for teachers in the program to work with pupils in supplementary three hour after school sessions. The time was to be used for the purpose of "developing student interest and background through trips and invited speakers." [1] In a number of the schools it was not found feasible to implement this section of the program proposal. There was no stipulation for many pupils enrolled in the alternative schools to attend classes after 1:00 p.m. Therefore, sufficient attendance could not be assured in planning such sessions. In the school where such activity could be planned the pupils benefited.

7. Statistical Findings:

All of the pupils who were in attendance at least 75% of the time were administered the California Achievement Test A & B, Level 4. Table I provides a summary of the test results

[1] Program Proposal - 1975-76

by grade based on the reported pre and post-test scores of the pupils in the program.

TABLE I

READING GRADE LEVEL GAINS IN STANDARIZED ACHIEVEMENT TESTING

(8 months)

Grade	N	Pre-Test Mean	Predicted Post-Test Mean	Actual Post-Test Mean
9	164	5.1	5.3	6.1
10	270	5.6	5.8	6.6
11	144	6.3	6.6	7.7
12	129	7.0	7.4	8.4

At all grade levels actual post-test means exceeded the predicted post-test means. In the appended MIR table, levels of significance are tabulated for each grade level. It may be concluded that the statistical objective with regard to achievement was more than satisfied in all of the analyzed groups.

Prior Recommendations Reviewed:

The list below consists of recommendations made in the evaluation of the program for the prior year (1974-1975). Each is followed by the evaluator's comments for the year (1975-1976).

1. "The program ..... should, therefore, be recycled."

Comment: The program was again successfully implemented.

2. "One educational assistant should be assigned to every program teacher."

Comment: No allocation was made to provide for assistants. However in a few cases college student volunteers were available.

3. "Facilities and equipment should be provided within the program to administer basic sight and hearing tests to all students."

Comment: This recommendation was not acted upon because of budget considerations.

4. "One standardized evaluation instrument should replace the myriad tests used."

Comment: This was accomplished by using a California Achievement Test for all pupils.

5. "The after school enrichment program needs to be coordinated with the alternative school prog[illegible] to insure meaningful attendance."

Comment: This recommendation was acted upon in most cases and implemented to advantage where possible.

6. "An effort should be made to maintain longitudinal records so that prescriptions are not duplicated."

Comment: This recommendation was not acted upon.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

All aspects of the program were successfully implemented except for the after school sessions which yet have to be fully developed. Duration, enrollment and attendance were in compliance with program proposals. Ample supplies and materials were available and the facilities were adequate. Dedication of the teachers and administrative staff was outstanding.

The cognitive achievement as measured by the California Achievement Tests showed statistically significant differences on all grade levels above that predicted, and has been so reported to the State Education Department on the appropriate M.I.R. Form, table 9.

Conclusion:

The program, as implemented during the school year (1975-1976) is deemed as highly successful.

The program has completely achieved its statistical objective, as summarized above.

Recommendations:

1. It is strongly recommended that the program be recycled.
2. An educational assistant should be assigned to every program teacher.
3. Provision for administering sight and hearing tests to all pupils should be made to improve diagnostic procedures.

4. The effort to improve the after school sessions should be continued.
5. Maintenance of longitudinal records of pupils to avoid duplication of effort should be established.

APPENDIX A

READING SKILLS LABORATORIES FOR ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOLS

FUNCTION # 0969617

PROGRAM ABSTRACT

This project is intended to provide individual and small group remedial reading instruction to pupils in 14 alternative high schools. Students were assigned on the basis of a minimum of two years retardation in reading skills as determined by standardized reading achievement test scores, recommendations of guidance counselors and staff judgments as to need. All work took place in a specially equipped reading laboratory.

A total of 707 pupils was reported as having been tested before and after participation in the program. The reading scores of the pupils reflected a statistically significant difference between the post-test and the anticipated post-test scores on the California Achievement Test for reading for all grades 9 through 12 using an historical regression design. The level of significance was established at the .01 probability level using the correlated "t" test for comparisons of the two means.

It can, therefore, be concluded that the program had satisfied its statistical objective with respect to improvement of reading skills of pupils on all grade levels. It can further be concluded on the basis of visits made to all program sites and interviews of staff personnel that the program was in full operation with no major discrepancies between the program as described in the Project Proposal and the program as implemented in practice.

APPENDIX B

Table 9 Historical Regression Design (6-step Formula) for reporting norm referenced achievement tests in Reading and Mathematics.

In the Table below, enter the requested assessment information about the tests used to evaluate the effectiveness of major project component/activities in achieving cognitive objectives. This form requires means obtained from scores in the form of grade equivalent units as processed by the 6-step formula.(see District Evaluator's Handbook of Selected Evaluation Procedures, 1974, p. 29-31) Before completing this table, read all footnotes. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

Component Code	Activity Code	Test Used 1/	Form		Level		Total N 2/	Group ID 3/	Number Tested 4/	Pretest		Predicted Posttest Mean	Actual Posttest		Obtained Value of t
			Pre	Post	Pre	Post				Date	Mean		Date	Mean	
60815000	720	CAT/ 70	A	B	4	4	281	Gr 9	164	9/75	5.1	5.3	5/76	6.1	6.63*
60816000	720	CAT/ 70	A	B	4	4	335	Gr 10	270	"	5.6	5.8	"	6.6	12.0*
60816000	720	CAT/ 70	A	B	4	4	196	Gr 11	144	"	6.3	6.6	"	7.7	9.34*
60816000	720	CAT/ 70	A	B	4	4	173	Gr 12	129	"	7.0	7.4	"	8.4	8.90*

1/ Identify the test used and year of publication (MAT-58, CAT-70, etc.).

2/ Total number of participants in the activity.

3/ Identify the participants by specific grade level (e.g., grade 3, grade 5). Where several grades are combined, enter the 4th and 5th digits of the component code.

4/ Number of pupils for whom both pre and post test data are provided.

*Signif. @ P ≤ .01

APPENDIX C

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION - DATA LOSS FORM
(attach to NARRATIVE) Function # 09 69617

In this table enter all Data Loss information. Between the MIR and this form, all participants in each activity must be accounted for. The component and activity codes used in completion of the MIR should be used here so that the two tables match. See definitions below table for further instructions.

Component Code	Activity Code	(1) Group I.D.	(2) Test Used	(3) Total N	(4) Number Tested/ Analyzed	(5) Participants Not Tested/ Analyzed		(6) Reasons Why Students Were Not Tested, Or If Tested, Were Not Analyzed	
						N	%		Number
6 0 8 1 5 0 0	7 1 2	GR 9	CAL	281	164	117	42	Transferred/ 27 Discharged/ 63	90
								Absent/ 12 Truant/ 10 Incomplete data 5	27
6 0 8 1 6 0 0	7 1 2	GR 10	CAL	335	270	85	25	Trans./ 23 Disch./ 40	63
								Abs./ 12 Tru./ 7 Inc. dat./ 3	22
6 0 8 1 6 0 0	7 1 2	GR 11	CAL	196	144	52	27	Trans./ 12 Disch./ 24	36
								Abs./ 10 Tru./ 4 Inc. dat./ 2	16
6 0 8 1 6 0 0	7 1 2	GR 12	CAL	173	129	44	25	Trans./ 8 Disch./ 24	32
								Abs./ 11 Tru./ 1 Inc. dat./ 0	12

(1) Identify the participants by specific grade level (e.g., grade 3, grade 9). Where several grades are combined, enter the last two digits of the component code.
(2) Identify the test used and year of publication (MAT-70, SDAT-74, Houghton Mifflin (IPMS) Level 1 etc.)
(3) Number of participants in the activity.
(4) Number of participants included in the pre and posttest calculations.
(5) Number and percent of participants not tested and/or not analyzed.
(6) Specify all reasons why students were not tested and/or analyzed. If any further documentation is available, please attach to this form. If further space is needed to specify and explain data loss, attach additional pages to this form.
(7) For each reason specified, provide a separate number count.